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Communal Representation in Tamil Nadu: 1850–1916
The Pre Non-Brahmin Movement Phase

by

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DESPITE its pejorative overtones as communal counterpoise, communal appeasement, minoritysm, and so on (see Krishna 1939; Page 1982), communal representation in India is often identified with the non-Brahmin movement, and its reformulation reservations with the Indian Constitution. But, analogous to the growth of the backward classes (see Radhakrishnan 1989; 1990), these had begun to evolve from at least the mid-19th century.[1]

In fact, communal representation and reservations were integral even to pre-British Indian society in the sense of the numerous social closures operated by the caste system.[2] However, the context of this paper is not these indigenous incarnations, but the categories introduced by the British

No doubt, to begin with these categories were a continuation of the pre-British ones. That was only in keeping with the British endeavour to create an overarching administrative machinery reflecting the established structure of the country (cf. Page 1982: 7), and its related concern for incorporating into its colonial framework, the traditionally well-entrenched, and from its viewpoint, the strategically placed, social groups, as its compradors (cf. Irschick 1986: 6). That explains the following directive of the Committee of Public Instruction, Madras, to the district officers, soon after its appointment in March 1826:

> 'T§he Committee wish it invariably to be kept in mind, that no measures can be pursued whatever other advantages they may offer, which are at variance with the customs and prejudices of the people. Such obstacles must be carefully avoided. Every measure must, as much as possible be divested of the odium of innovation; and be such as to induce the people to

> go along with the Government in the undertaking (Public, Sundries, vol. 145).

That also explains this Committee's educational efforts through the "principal" or "respectably connected" inhabitants, that is, Brahmins and other high castes Brahminnis proximi; and preference for Brahmin teachers in the schools established since 1826 (ibid). The British emphasis of about half a century thence on the education of this "influential class" should also be seen in this light (see GOMa 1982: 403-4).

In fact, the British attempts to go along with this class long preceded its educational efforts. As early as in 1814 the Court of Directors had ordered exclusion of Indian Christians, then mostly of the "untouchable" castes, from certain offices such as of munsiff, vakil, and law officer in Bengal Presidency, and also of sudder ameen (civil judge), and Cavalry in Madras Presidency (see Public Despatches from England to Fort William, no. 8,2 February 1831).

In 1831 the Court of Directors did convey the inexpediency of such exclusion and their belated realization that the British religious neutrality in India did not require placing by law converts to Christianity in a less advantageous situation than others (ibid). In 1846, in response to a request from the Sheriff of Madras for sanction to select peons from among the Pariahs to be employed in the grand gaol indiscriminately with those of other castes, the BOR reaffirmed this principle:

> The Sheriff is informed that upon the principle laid down in the Honourable Court's dispatch number eight of 2nd February 1831, the Government do not recognise caste, or any religious distinction as a ground of civil disability and all classes or castes are therefore alike eligible to offices for which the Head of an office may consider them qualified, and their

employment advantageous to the public interests (BRP, 21 April 1845, and 23 April 1846).

But, it was one thing to reaffirm a principle and quite another to redeem it. And therein was the British dilemma. One instance of this dilemma was the inability of the Board for College and Public Instruction, Madras, established in December 1826, to decide on an application it received in 1833 from a Pariah boy:

> The Board... have not felt it right to decide of themselves whether a person of this class shall be admitted as a scholar, in consequence of the strong repugnance evinced by the native Headmasters to give instruction to Pariahs, and the knowledge that Hindoos of caste would consider their prejudices, interfered with, were Pariahs taught in the same classes, with themselves... (Public Consultations, vol. 618, 24 January 1834).

The Madras government whom the Board approached sought the views of the Bombay and Bengal governments (ibid). The result of this correspondence could not be traced.[3] But, the fate of the Pariah boy could not have been any different from that of a Mahar boy who sought admission to a Dharwar school in 1856. Rejecting his petition, despite the May 1854 order of the Court of Directors that "no boy be refused admission to a Government college or school merely on the ground of caste" (GO 329 Home (Education), 17 March 1919),[4] the Bombay government wrote:

> There can be no doubt that the Mahar petitioner has abstract justice in his side; and Government trust that the prejudices which at present prevent him from availing himself of existing means of education in Dharwar may be ere long removed... But Government are obliged to keep in mind that to interfere with the prejudices of ages in a summary manner, for the sake of one or few individuals, would probably do a great damage to the cause of education. The disadvantage under which the petitioner labours is not one which has originated with this Government, and it is one which Government cannot summarily remove by interfering in his favour, as he begs them to do (GOMa 1982: 339-40).

Underlying the contradiction thus evident between the professed

neutrality principle and its practice were the British perceptions of the caste-based structures of power and privilege, and its related patronage politics. It is with these perceptions and practices in Madras Presidency and their effect on south Indian society that this paper is concerned in the context of the British curbs and counterpoises against Brahmins, and concessions for and conciliation of Muslims, and the efforts of other non-Brahmin groups to take advantage of these manoeuvres.

Brahmins and the British administration

It is now a well established fact that as the "ritualistic supermen" and literati, combining in them both sacral and temporal powers, Brahmins had dominated pre-British Indian society. Dubois, a French missionary who spent about thirty years in India mostly in the Tamil regions, since a couple of years before the fuscillades of the French Revolution, had remarked in the early 1800s that "the rule of all the Hindu princes, and often that of the Mahomedans, was, properly speaking, Brahminical rule, since all posts of confidence were held by Brahmins" (Dubois 1982: 4-5, 289-90).

With their scribal background Brahmins were the first to realize that under the colonial dispensation English education was the key to government employment and literate professions. Therefore, through their eager acquisition of such education, as Dubois observed, they perpetuated their predominance under the British rule as well:

> The Brahmins have also been clever enough to work their way into favour with the great European Power that now governs India. They occupy the highest and most lucrative posts in different administrative boards and Government offices, as well as in the judicial courts of the various districts. In

> fact there is no branch of public administration in which they have not made themselves indispensable (*Op. cit.*, 290-91).

This predominance is more clearly brought out by Suntharalingam:

> As the European Collector was often overwhelmed with multifarious duties, it was the *sheristadar* who attended to the onerous details of revenue collection and accounts, settling the annual assessment and authorizing remissions. In the eyes of the rural community, the *sheristadar* was the "real administrator" who controlled the sole channel of access to the Collector"... As the chief executive officer of the taluk containing a few hundred villages, the *tahsildar* discharged revenue, judicial, and police duties under the supervision of the... Collector (Suntharalingam 1980: 18).

To begin with, the key positions were held by Mahratta Brahmins,[5] a minuscule group.[6] By the mid-19th century they along with the other, especially Tamil, Brahmins, controlled the entire district administration:[7] In the whole of Madras Presidency Brahmins accounted for about 90 per cent of all the *huzur* (chief) *sheristadars*, 87 per cent of all the *naib* (deputy) *sheristadars*, 75 per cent of all the *tahsildars*, and 78 per cent of all these positions taken together[8] (Table 1).

Table 1 Composition of district administration, 1855.

Caste/community	Huzur Sheristadar No.	Huzur Sheristadar %	Naib Sheristadar No.	Naib Sheristadar %	Tahsildar No.	Tahsildar %	Total No.	Total %
Mahratta Brahmins	17	81.0	20	52.6	117	47.6	154	50.5
Other Brahmins	2	9.5	13	34.2	68	27.6	83	27.2
Non-Brahmins	2	9.5	3	7.9	45	18.3	50	16.4
Muslims	--	--	--	--	13	5.3	13	4.3
Indian Christians	--	--	2	5.3	3	1.2	5	1.6
Total	21	100.0	38	100.0	246	100.0	305	100.0

Source: Tabulated from Suntharalingam 1980: 18.

However, by this time the government itself realized the danger of its exclusive reliance on Brahmins (cf. Irschick 1986: 6), and began to check their monopoly in public service and weaken their family connections, a vital link to such monopoly and their

established lines of patronage.

Curbs on employment

The first attempt in this direction was in the 1850s. The revenue establishment in Nellore district was then controlled by as many as 50 Brahmins, all from the same family, and the Collector could transfer only two of the 49 relations of <u>naib sheristadar</u> Gotoor Vencataramaniah even after the BOR's order. On ascertaining this the Governor wrote in 1853:

> Whatever may be the aptitude of the members of this family for the public service, and whatever may be the family differences, or disputes between themselves, it is evident that the Head of the office--the European Officer--must be almost powerless to detect and punish fraud or wrong on the part of the members of this family, and, as a necessary consequence, he will be powerless to protect the people against the extortions or oppressions of the family (BRP, 1 December 1853; 9 March 1854).

The Governor felt that people would not bring forward complaints, and seek protection against wrongs done by members of this family while they see them occupying so many important posts and all the younger members introduced into office gradually rising to higher posts. So, he desired the BOR to take immediate steps for effectively abating and remedying the evil by transferring Vencataramaniah, and other Brahmins, and debarring the Collector from advancing, without the BOR's permission, the junior members of the same family beyond their existing grade unless by transfer to other districts. The Governor also wanted the BOR to examine the statements of relationship among public servants in other districts, and adopt similar action should one or two families were found engrossing the greater portion of the appointments (<u>ibid</u>). The result was a Standing Order of the BOR (BSO):

> Collectors should be careful to see that the subordinate appointments in their districts are not monopolized by the members of a few influential families. Endeavour should always be made to divide the principal appointments in each district among the several castes. A proportion of the tahsildars in each district should belong to castes other than the Brahman, and it should be a standing rule that the two chief revenue servants in the Collector's office should be of different castes (ibid)

In the following years the BOR reminded the Collectors of this order which they also tried to enforce. Thus, in 1866-67 the Tinnevelly Collector reported that in that district the "influences for evil" of the native officials had grown far beyond his power to grapple with. The BOR ordered the surrounding Collectors to assist him by arranging for transfers, in this case, of the Pillais, a non-Brahmin upper caste, with whom every office in the district was "crowded" (BRP 607, 12 March 1886).

Shortly thence, WR Cornish, Census Superintendent of Madras, reported that the "Brahmanical element" was strong in all higher offices in the civil departments open to Indians, that in every department there were representatives of this "great class" (GOM 1874: 134), and that the Brahmins' contempt for the lower classes was in itself a serious bar to their usefulness in official life:

> If the Brahmans really represented the feelings of their countrymen, and had any sympathy with, or desire for, the moral and material improvement of the people, outside their own small section of the community, no great harm would arise from their employment in the service of the State; but it is sufficiently notorious that, as a class, the Brahmans care mostly for their own advancement, and that they have no desire to see the lower classes educated or improved in social position (Op. cit., 197).

Cornish counselled the government that politically it was not to its advantage to view every question connected with the progress of the country through "Brahman spectacles", and that its true policy would be to limit their numbers in official positions and

encourage a larger proportion of non-Brahmin Hindus and Muslims so as to allow no special preeminence or great preponderance of any particular caste (ibid).

In 1886 the BOR itself described its efforts to enforce the BSO as necessarily fitful, constantly neutralized, at the best but partial, and always subject to the persistent counteracting process of officials struggling to return to their own surroundings. It also mentioned that while there was a "natural combination" amongst all native officials to help each other by mutual accommodation, there was no such understanding among the several Collectors (BRP 607, 12 March 1886).

As illustration the BOR mentioned that in Cuddapah as many as 48 posts were monopolized by just one family, and the whole district was in the hands of "cliques of relations, ramifying through all branches of the administration", making it "most difficult, and often impossible to unravel the truth from the network of interested falsehood with which it is entangled and overlaid, while defalcation, etc is the natural outcrop of such protective influences". As Bellary was suffering from the same causes and its huzur sheristadar D Krishna Rao was found to be surrounded by officially employed connections to a degree incompatible with public interest, the BOR ordered his transfer to Cuddapah and his similarly circumstanced brother-in-law, deputy tahsildar A Lakshmana Rao, to Kurnool. The BOR noted that Coimbatore was similarly hampered, and so doubtless were the other districts in varying degrees (ibid; also GO 4519 Revenue, 17 October 1892; cf. Washbrook 1977: 36-37). Its account of the

state of affairs in Tanjore needs elaboration.

Following loss of crops caused by the 1884 rains and floods, the Tanjore Collector proposed in 1885 remissions to the extent of Rs 8 lakhs. As this sum was far in excess of the remissions granted till then, the government deputed HS Thomas, a member of the BOR and an ex-Collector of Tanjore closely familiar with the area and its subordinate bureaucracy, to ascertain if such heavy remissions were really called for. His investigations revealed that nearly half the amount claimed was fraudulent and the outcome of a well-organised conspiracy by officials interested in obtaining remissions on their and their relations' lands, together accounting in value for more than a hundred lakhs of rupees. Following this scandal the government dismissed 19 officials (13 Brahmins, four Pillais, and two Naidus--another non-Brahmin upper caste), awarded lesser punishments to six others (four Brahmins and two Pillais), and called upon four others (all Brahmins) to state how, when scrutinizing the jummabundy (annual revenue settlement) accounts they passed them as correct and failed to bring to notice the numerous fraudulent entries (GO 122 Revenue, 15 February 1886; cf. Washbrook 1977: 38-39).

As a prelude to these illustrations the BOR had dwelt on the grave consequences for the administration from two causes: First, "the accumulation of many public offices in the hands of relatives of a few influential families, tending naturally to the formation of strong cliques for the benefit of those families necessarily at the expense of others and of the State". Second, the intensification of such personal interests "by the possession

of landed property in the district in which the monopolizing families hold office, such landed property necessarily implying influence, as well as interests generally inimical to those of the State by which they are employed so that officials are naturally under strong temptation to be at the heart the guardians of their own personal and family interests in preference to those of the public" (BRP 607, 12 March 1886).

The BOR was unequivocal in its conclusion that it was better for the State materially, and such officials morally, to have their sphere of duty outside the circle of such temptations, and that this could be arranged only by employing them in districts other than those in which they were subject to such influences. Accordingly, it directed the Collectors to submit returns of the properties and relationships of all officials on salaries exceeding Rs 50 a month, that is, of posts involving magisterial authority (ibid).

While acknowledging the excellence of the BOR's objective the Governor held that it had exceeded its powers, and ordered the withdrawal of its proceedings, expressing at the same time his willingness to consider any other proposal. When the BOR insisted that its proposal was the best practical solution, he rejected it in toto on the ground that the necessity for wholesome transfers was not made out and the BOR's scheme could not be so modified as to render it both effective and innocuous (GO 77 Revenue, 30 January 1899).

In 1890 while working out the Provincial Civil Service scheme, the Madras government modified free competition for posts of

deputy collectors for enabling it to appoint one-third of the vacancies by selection from persons of proved merit and ability. As this had no effect on the Brahmins, in 1896 it limited appointment of deputy collectors by open competition to one per year for correcting their communal distribution (Suntharalingam 1980: 125)

By this time instances of the use of family connections by revenue officials had assumed scandalous proportions. One indication of this was a write-up in The Hindu of August 17, 1892, on the relationship between Krishna Rao, and Lakshmana Rao (both of the Bellary fame), and a number of other officials. Following this, the BOR called for a complete list of the relations of these officials in public service in the district. Finding that a state of things similar to what necessitated their transfer from Bellary existed in Anantapur (then separated from Bellary district) also, the BOR cancelled its earlier proceedings transferring to Anantapur Krishna Rao from Cuddapah and Lakshmana Rao from Kurnool and ordered for the exchange of the former with the huzur sheristadar of Cuddapah and the latter with the tahsildar of Koilkuntla in Kurnool (GO 4519 Revenue, 17 October 1892).

Preponderance in higher education

No doubt, Brahmin preponderance in public service was a reflection of that in higher education. Reviewing the results of the 1870-72 Matriculation and First Arts (FA) examinations, the MPAR for 1871-72 recorded that "[t]he percentage of Brahmins, always immense, has increased, while that of other Hindus has greatly fallen off". The situation was much the same even after a

decade. The PIR for 1880-81 recorded the educational statistics as "curious, illustrating the energy with which Brahmins are endeavouring to keep the lead in the higher education". The PIR for 1881-82 revealed that for the FA and BA examinations combined there was one candidate for every 125 Brahmins in the Presidency as against one candidate for as many as 5888 Other Hindus, 11984 Muslims, and 447 Indian Christians. The PIR also recorded that the vast preponderance of Brahmins in the Arts course was highly creditable to their ability and energy. The DPI's regret then was that they were little prone to adopt callings of a scientific or practical character. However, in the PIR for 1882-83 he wrote:

> I rejoice to have to now to record a change in the Brahmin students, which promises well for the country and for the future, influence and position of the Brahmin community. The Civil Engineering College, the Medical College, and the School of Agriculture,... are attracting to themselves Brahmin students in rapidly increasing numbers whilst the growing partiality of BA students for the science course is an indication of the same spirit.

By this time, when the government had determined to employ only men of acknowledged educational attainments in higher branches of public service and there was keen competition for appointments, only about one-third of the graduates had gained entry into public service (PIR 1882-83). In view of this, the PIR for 1882-83 recorded that it was hopeless to expect Europeans, Eurasians, or Muslims to contend on equal terms with Hindus (read Brahmins) whose progress at school or college was more rapid, and proposed reservation of appointments for the various classes. The government concurred with the DPI, but postponed its decision to further consideration (ibid).

Sensing the strong nexus between English education and government employment, by 1888 the education department began to express its concern about the disproportionate distribution of higher education as well. For instance, the PIR for 1888-89 recorded the unequal distribution of higher University education among the different sections of the population as certainly a matter for regret, and an anomaly which demanded the serious attention of all interested in the progress of the country.

However, it was only in the 1900s that any action was initiated, that too in the limited context of the College of Engineering, Madras.[9] Of the students admitted to this College about 92 per cent in 1899, and 79 to 93 per cent during 1900-03 were Brahmins, though their population in the Presidency was only about 3 per cent (Table 2).

The College rules already had provisions for admitting four qualified Europeans/Eurasians and three Muslims annually, even if they were not within the first 15 qualified candidates. In view of the Brahmin preponderance, the DPI, College Principal, and the education department officials favoured reservation for non-

Table 2 Engineer students by caste/community.

Year	Brahmins No.	Brahmins %	Other Hindus No.	Other Hindus %	Muslims No.	Muslims %	Christians No.	Christians %	Total No.	Total %
1899	11	91.7	--	--	--	--	1	8.3	12	100.0
1900	11	78.6	1	7.1	--	--	2	14.3	14	100.0
1901	13	86.7	--	--	1	6.7	1	6.7	15	100.0
1902	13	86.7	1	6.7	--	--	1	6.7	15	100.0
1903	14	93.3	--	--	--	--	1	6.7	15	100.0
Total	62	87.3	2	2.8	1	1.4	6	8.4	71	100.0
Population		3.1		86.1		6.4		2.7		98.2

Note: Christians include Europeans/Eurasians; population as per 1901 Census. Source: GO 544 Education, 9 November 1903.

Brahmin castes as well (see Educational GOs 244-45 of 25 May, and 544 of 9 December, 1903). But, AG Cardew, Education Secretary, felt that Brahmin preponderance was a case of the survival of the fittest, and that it was not shown that Brahmin was less fit for engineer's duties than non-Brahmin Hindus, while it was proved that he was more intelligent. He, therefore, wanted to see if there was any sufficient reason for deliberately preferring the "less intelligent class".

Responding to Cardew, the Coimbatore Collector credited the Brahmins with more brains; the Nellore Collector rated them as the best workers, on the average more intelligent than others, and "not a whit more dishonest"; the Bellary Acting Collector remarked that "the Brahmin is as a rule clever and can be made to do good work", and did not "consider it necessary to make admission of men of other castes more easy"; the South Canara Acting Collector favoured them more eloquently:

> If other castes are as good as Brahmins then there is no particular object in giving them "most favoured" treatment. If they are not (and I believe they are not), then you are deliberately laying yourself out to get an inferior article... [A]pparently the idea is to convert a sort of free trade into a modified form of protection; as an encouragement to Vaisyas and Sudras to move out of their hereditary groove it might be useful. Intellectual work always has been more or less the property of the Brahmin "guild" and I dont consider the preponderance of Brahmins... undesirable except in so far as it indicates a stagnation in the intellectual activity of other castes.

The remaining officials were against Brahmin preponderance: The Vizagpatam Collector reported that Sudras made excellent engineers, and wanted to increase their numbers. The Cuddapah Collector remarked that the "clannish nature" of the Brahmins was an obstacle to the "senior local man" exercising proper

supervision over them. The Madurai Acting Collector expatiated that "an engineer has generally a lot of camping and knocking about to do", that "though an Aiyangar will, as a rule, adapt himself to this life, an Aiyar will not and tends sooner or later to get lazy", and that "the non-Brahmin, though his brain work is worse, is generally better than either at knocking about and handling coolies". The Ganjam Collector recorded that "Brahmins are good in an office, but not so useful in the hard out of door life that an engineer should lead" and that "besides, if Brahmins get such a monopoly the subordinate posts will be filled with their relations or caste men...". The Tanjore Acting Collector complained that Brahmins constantly neglected their duties for performing religious ceremonies. The Trichinopoly Collector conveyed that "in the event of any underhand or dishonest practices obtaining among the subordinates,... Brahmins form a clique which it is very difficult to break down", and that "non-Brahmins and Mussalmans can be more easily found out, because they have fewer friends and more enemies"

Virtually all the officials consulted were Europeans. As most of them were for letting in other castes more freely, in 1903 the government enhanced the admissions to the College from 15 to 20 an year, and ordered induction of not less than 25 per cent of the candidates from non-Brahmin castes (GO 544 Education, 9 November 1903).

Though Brahmin preponderance in higher education continued even after this order, it was only since the late 1920s that the government made any serious attempt to reduce it.

Further curbs on employment

It was, however, continuing with its efforts to curb Brahmin monopoly in public service. Thus, in 1904 the BOR obtained from the Collectors a statement of the castes of all employees in superior service, that is, on monthly salaries of Rs 15 and above,[10] in the revenue offices in the districts. As the Brahmin-non-Brahmin ratio was 70:30, it instructed the Collectors to watch the recruitment of non-Brahmins for ensuring more fair distribution of appointments. That year, in the uniformly introduced district establishment list of revenue officials, the BOR provided a column to show the caste/sect of each subordinate for enabling the Collectors to see how far the BSO was enforced (GOs 792 Revenue, 25 July 1904; 2491 Revenue, 15 August 1911).

In 1909, the BOR informed the Registrar of Cooperative Societies that "not more than one half of the total number of superior appointments in an office should ordinarily be held by Brahmins, the other half being at least the due share of non-Brahmin Hindus, Indian Christians, Muhammadans, and Eurasians". Finding that the proportion of Brahmins did not show any substantial dimunition, in the following year the BOR asked the Registrar why he had not followed its instructions and why the power of making appointments shall not be withdrawn from him. It also ordered that until the proportion of Brahmins was reduced to nearly 50 per cent of the total strength he should appoint fully qualified non-Brahmins in preference to Brahmins (GO 2357 Revenue, 16 July 1910)

By this time Brahmin preponderance had also became a threat in the Bombay Presidency. The Bombay government regretted in 1910

that its principle, recorded in 1881 and reaffirmed repeatedly, that in distributing public patronage endeavour should be made to secure a due admixture of the various races/castes, had remained practically a dead letter, and that this was particularly so in the central division and in the Marathi speaking districts of the southern division of the Presidency where Brahmins continued to secure by far the largest proportion of government posts in all departments and in all grades of service. It also reported that Brahmins showed bitter hostility towards the British, that there had been no seditious movement in which they, especially Chitpavans and Desasthas, had not taken part, and that it had difficulty in depending on their loyalty. It felt that the danger of their disaffection was greater in the "great imperial services" such as of the postal, railways, and the telegraphs, where the harm which the subordinates with little supervision had "special facilities for doing, by spreading the taint of disloyalty", was incalculable.

The Madras government's reaction to Bombay's predicament was lukewarm. In the public department one official recalled the "strange tales" he had heard when on the West Coast, of an adjoining Bombay district where a native Collector had filled the district with his relatives, his <u>duffedar</u> (personal peon) even being a first cousin. He concluded that Bombay government evidently had good cause for alarm. As of Madras, he expressed his confidence that the BOR was exercising "constant vigilance".

Another official accused the Bombay government of clearly convicting itself of "extraordinary supineness" in having

omitted, despite the "startling warning" of 1897, including the murder of two British officials by Chitpavan Brahmins, to take effective measures to prevent the predominance of a single caste. As of the conditions in Madras he reasoned thus:

> The real danger against which action should... be concerted... is not against the predominance of Brahmins, who [have] not been shown to be specially disaffected towards the Government and who after all [are] unquestionably, on the average, the most efficient portion of the community, but against the tendency towards the practical exclusion from the higher offices of the State of those portions of the community, especially the Muhammadans and the Eurasians, who are least able to compete with the rest of the population in the severe struggle imposed by our examination system.

Accordingly, he wanted the government to make some allowance for the "inferior efficiency" of Muslims and Eurasians, take up seriously the question of promoting a fair proportion of them to the rank of deputy tahsildars, tahsildars and district munsiffs.

A third official expressed his view against the monopoly of any single caste:

> [W]hen an office consists largely of one caste... faults and even serious offences are concealed and members of other castes are shut out of employment. The first is bad for efficient administration and leads to corruption and the transfer of power from the hands in which it should lie to the hands of inferior public servants. The second... is unfair to the excluded communities and must create discontent among them.

Stating that "there is always an ill-defined apprehension about what the future may have in store in the way of sedition", he stressed that like the class regiments to prevent collusion and detect seditious or mutinous conspiracies, there was need for quasi-class establishments. He also noted that while in the higher ranks of public service there must "always be a high preponderance of Brahmins, since they are by far the most intellectual class, yet it is important to prevent that caste, or

any other caste gaining a monopoly".

The BOR's scrutiny of the state of affairs prompted by the Bombay missive again revealed the predominance of Brahmins: They held 57 to 76 per cent jobs in different departments, and about 69 per cent of all the jobs, though they were only about 3 per cent of the population (Table 3).

Table 3 Officials by caste/community, 1911.

Department	Brahmins		Non-Brahmins		Muslims		Christians		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Revenue	4106	70.1	1324	22.6	214	3.7	213	3.6	5857	100.0
Judicial	178	62.7	78	27.5	10	3.5	18	6.3	284	100.0
Salt, Abkari, and Customs	613	56.8	284	26.3	45	4.2	138	12.8	1080	100.0
Public Works	397	72.7	88	16.1	8	1.5	53	9.7	546	100.0
Education	440	75.7	56	9.6	32	5.5	53	9.1	581	100.0
Total	5734	68.7	1830	21.9	309	3.7	475	5.7	8348	100.0
Population		3.2		87.4		6.6		2.8		100.0

Note: Non-Brahmins include Others (1.8%); Christians include Europeans/Eurasians (0.1%); population as per 1911 Census.
Source: GO 1561 Public, 19 December 1912

In the light of this preponderance the BOR again asked all the departments to adhere to the BSO. In view of the difficulty in getting qualified candidates, the Chief Presidency Magistrate even proposed the creation of a recruitment bureau for different grades and classes of appointments, though the government dropped it as unfeasible (GO 1561 Public, 19 December 1912).

Following the 1909-10 Morley-Minto Reforms, the first major step towards Indianisation of the administration, in 1911 the Government of India desired the provincial governments to secure in their services adequate representation of the various classes. On its part, the Madras government called for statistics from all heads of departments on the distribution of the various classes

in public service. In that connection the BOR reported that it was scrutinizing the annual lists of persons recommended by the Collectors for posts of tahsildars and deputy tahsildars to check the preponderance of Brahmins by securing suitable non-Brahmins from other districts if the district did not have a sufficient number of them. It also mentioned that having found in 1910 that Brahmin preponderance was marked in some districts, it informed the district authorities that it would decline to place any more Brahmins on the list of such districts, unless the Collectors had taken every possible means to find suitable non-Brahmins for inclusion in the lists.

However, the government's scrutiny of the revenue establishment list corrected upto January 1, 1911 revealed that in no less than 10 out of the 24 districts the BSO was on that date apparently disregarded. Expressing its lack of confidence in the care taken by the BOR to avoid the dangers arising from the concentration of an undue number of posts in a district in the hands of a single caste or a single family, it advised the BOR to institute an enquiry in all districts (GO 1763 Revenue (Confidential), 9 June 1911). In a related GO it also declined to concur with the BOR that "different sects of Brahmins may safely be regarded... as constituting different castes", and held that "[i]nspite of the existence of rivalries... there is reason to believe that they will unite in their opposition to the preferment of men of other, and in [the BOR's] view, lower castes". Therefore, it insisted on maintaining as strictly as possible the rule that the men doing duty in the appointments of

sheristadar and head clerk shall not be of the same caste (GO 2491 Revenue, 15 August 1911)

In a note on provincial services prepared for the Royal Commission on Public Services, appointed in pursuance of the Morley-Minto Reforms, the Madras government reported in 1913 that all the officers appointed after the competitive examinations of 1893-95 were, with one exception, Brahmins, that of the total deputy Collectors in the Presidency they accounted for 53 per cent in 1896 and 55 per cent in 1912, and that in the judicial branch in 1912, 15 (83.3%) of the 18 permanent sub-judges, and 93 (73.8%) of the 126 permanent district *munsiffs* were Brahmins. Stating that as a consequence of their extraordinary ability in passing examinations, it was practically certain that they would always or at least for many years, obtain all or nearly all the appointments thrown open to competition, it observed that such a monopoly was not advantageous to the administration both because of the preponderance of this one class and because, the large proportion of them recruited will leave it no opportunities for rendering justice to the other classes. Therefore, it recommended that the proportion of Brahmins shall not exceed 50 per cent (GO 202 Public, 12 February 1913; also Arooran 1980: 37).

Parallel to and reinforcing these efforts to reduce the representation of Brahmins were those to increase that of Muslims.

Muslims and the British administration

The resentment of Muslims against their political dispossession by the British, their lack of social integration with non-Muslims, and failure to participate in English education and its

material benefits, the belated British efforts to draw them into its patronage network, and other related issues have all been concerns of several works (see Ahmed 1981; Coupland 1942; Hasan 1985; Hunter 1872). Suffice to say that though in Madras Presidency, where Muslims were not too large a group and their sense of hurt, loss of pride, and discord with the Hindus were not too deep (cf. McPherson 1969: 401), as a follow up to Viceroy Mayo's resolution of August 7, 1871 on Muslim education, in a memorandum of July 29, 1872, Governor Hobart laid down what turned out to be a major policy on Muslim education and employment for over the next four decades.

Restating Mayo's views, Hobart regretted that Muslims should have passed, from intimate association with the British in the governance of territories they once ruled, into almost absolute political insignificance, and should have been superseded in that association by "races" whom they had subjugated and considered very inferior to themselves. He saw this as injurious to the most vital interests of the empire, and reasoned thus:

The exclusion of any class, by any other fault than its own, from political power to which other classes are admitted, and for which it is not disqualified, is opposed to the general principles of political science. When the class excluded has a character and history such as of the Muslims, the temptation to disaffection and conspiracy against the State is exceedingly strong. The State, in losing the services of Muslims, loses the services of men possessing some peculiar qualifications for the business of government, which are probably more valuable than

those possessed by the "races" which have supplanted them. One of the principal objects of according Indians a participation in the governance of India is that they may be interested in its stability. This object is all the more important in the case of a class whose power for good or evil is greater than that of any other in the country.

Hobart attributed the Muslim alienation to the long absence of the demand for Muslim functionaries in the departments of the administration requiring legal knowledge, because of the replacement of Muslim law and the languages in which it was conveyed by English law and the English language throughout India; and to very few Muslims qualifying themselves for public service. He felt that the first cause was beyond the government's control, while the second could be modified or removed. Accordingly, he considered the reasons which prevented Muslims from qualifying for public service, namely, their impression that the government was disinclined to admit them to public employment and their objection on religious or other grounds to its education, and how these could be eliminated. He explained that the impression of the Muslims about the government did not arise from any prejudice on its part, that qualified Hindus were more eager and ambitious aspirants to public employment than qualified Muslims, and that the former usually presented themselves in the "van of the crowd of candidates", while the latter were relegated to the background (GO 288 Education, 7 October 1872; Suntharalingam 1980: 254-56; also cf. Ahmed 1981: 133-140).

Preferential employment

Hobart's memorandum was followed up by a circular on his anxiety

to see that Muslims participated in public service more proportionate to their numbers and intelligence, and that the claims of those Muslims who satisfied the prescribed tests should be specially considered when filling up vacancies. The circular also called for statements of Muslims employed in various offices on salaries exceeding Rs 10 a month, with the name of the person, his salary, and designation, vernacular languages with which he was acquainted, nature of the tests passed, and any other desirable information (ibid; also Saraswathi 1974: 107-8).

In the years since 1872 the government called for periodic reports from its officials on the special efforts required for giving qualified Muslims a fair share of public employment. In keeping with the Government of India's directive following the recommendations of the 1882 Education Commission, in 1885 it also directed the Accountant General to furnish on September 15 every year details on the extent of Muslim employment in government for inclusion in the annual MPARs (EP 507, 14 August 1885). The PIRs also devoted a section to such details.

The information obtained from these sources revealed the continuing under-representation of Muslims, and over-representation of Brahmins: For a population of 6.4 per cent, Muslims were only 2.7 per cent of the officials in 1881, despite an increase of 12.5 per cent over the preceding decade. For a population of 3.7 per cent, Brahmins were 60.2 per cent and almost the same proportion as in 1872. Though by 1886 the representation of Muslims had increased it was mostly in posts on salaries not exceeding Rs 10 a month: In 1886 Muslim officials on

salaries not exceeding and exceeding Rs 10 were 24.6 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively, whereas the corresponding figures for Brahmins were 5.2 and 55.1 (Table 4).[11]

Table 4 Officials by salary and caste/community.

Salary/ year	Brahmins No.	%	Other Hindus No.	%	Muslims No.	%	Christians No.	%	Total No.	%
Rs 10 or less										
1872	62	32.0	118	60.8	4	2.1	10	5.2	194	100.0
1881	72	36.9	109	55.9	6	3.1	8	4.1	195	100.0
1886	649	5.2	8531	68.1	3081	24.6	268	2.1	12529	100.0
Above Rs 10										
1872	3105	62.6	1479	29.8	122	2.5	257	5.2	4963	100.0
1881	3168	61.1	1623	31.3	139	2.7	255	4.9	5185	100.0
1886	3517	55.1	2078	32.6	265	4.2	522	8.2	6382	100.0
Rs 11 to 49										
1872	2583	64.1	1212	30.1	97	2.4	140	3.5	4032	100.0
1881	2623	62.1	1337	31.6	117	2.8	150	3.5	4227	100.0
Rs 50 to 149										
1872	398	57.1	196	28.1	22	3.2	81	11.6	697	100.0
1881	407	56.5	220	30.6	19	2.6	74	10.3	720	100.0
Rs 150+										
1872	124	53.0	71	30.3	3	1.3	36	15.4	234	100.0
1881	138	58.0	66	27.7	3	1.3	31	13.0	238	100.0
Total										
1872	3167	61.4	1597	31.0	126	2.4	267	5.2	5157	100.0
1881	3240	60.2	1732	32.2	145	2.7	263	4.9	5380	100.0
1886	4166	22.0	10609	56.1	3346	17.7	790	4.2	18911	100.0
Population										
1871		3.5		88.9		5.9		1.7		100.0
1881		3.7		88.0		6.4		1.9		100.0

Note: Other Hindus include Buddhists/Jains; Christians include Europeans/Eurasians. Source: BRP 1318, May 1882; GO 1296 Revenue, 1 March 1887.

Though the 1886 statistics dividing officials into two salary categories of not exceeding and exceeding Rs 10 were insufficient for ascertaining the distribution of appointments and the future returns were to show the number of each class employed in the various upper grades separately, the BOR again directed the Collectors to introduce as many Muslims into public service, consistently with the efficiency of their offices and the claims of the other classes (GO 1296 Revenue, 1 March 1887).

Educational advancement

Meanwhile, the government was also monitoring its policy since 1872 on Muslim education. The MPAR observed in 1871-72 as of "deserving note" that a Muslim obtained the BA degree for the first time in the history of Madras University, in 1877-78 that in Matriculation the advance was most marked among Muslims, and in 1887-88 again as of "deserving note" that another Muslim obtained the BA degree; while the PIR observed in 1887-88 that few things were more encouraging in the history of education in the Presidency than the appreciable advance Muslim education was making year after year.

These observations were not without exaggeraton: For a population of 6.4 per cent, Muslims were only 1.8 per cent of the total Matriculates from 1858 to 1890, 0.9 per cent of the total Arts and Professional graduates from 1861 to 1890, and 1.5 per cent and 3.8 per cent of the total students in 1891 under higher and secondary education respectively. In contrast, for a population of 3.7 per cent, the corresponding figures for Brahmins were 60.2, 66.6, 66.5 and 42.5. Though nowhere near Brahmins, it was only in primary education that Muslim representation was close to their population percentage.

In a numerical sense, however, the observations were not without significance, especially since the 1890s: While Muslims had only 503 Matriculates and 21 Arts and Professional graduates over the preceding three decades, the corresponding additions were by 248/56, 462/76, and 978/59 during the years 1891-1900, 1901-10, and 1911-16 respectively. This increase was mainly a

reflection of that in the number of students under higher and secondary education, from 67/1275 in 1891, to 87/2353 in 1901, to 103/5519 in 1911, to 200/7114 in 1916 (Tables 5-7), that is, just on the eve of the launching of the non-Brahmin movement.

Table 5 Matriculates by caste/community.

Caste/community	1858-1870	1871-1880	1881-1890	1891-1900	1901-1910	1911-1916	Total
Brahmins	1385	4937	10453	9182	16038	18085	60080
	53.5	61.3	60.6	64.9	65.3	60.6	62.3
Other Hindus	624	1910	4176	2869	5389	7643	22611
	24.1	23.7	24.2	20.3	22.0	25.6	23.5
Muslims	41	119	343	248	462	978	2191
	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.9	3.3	2.3
Christians	540	1086	2244	1810	2636	3109	11425
	20.8	13.5	13.0	12.8	10.7	10.4	11.9
Others	--	1	27	29	24	24	105
	--	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	2590	8053	17243	14138	24549	29839	96412
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Christians include Europeans/Eurasians. Table excludes figures for 1904-5. Source: Tabulated from the University of Madras, Calendar for 1922; GOM 1874: 195.

Table 6 Arts and Professional graduates by caste/community.

Caste/community	1861-1870	1871-1880	1881-1890	1891-1900	1901-1910	1911-1916	Total
Brahmins	36	298	1197	3565	4568	4365	14029
	58.1	63.3	67.8	70.5	71.4	65.7	68.8
Other Hindus	9	81	352	910	1173	1512	4037
	14.5	17.2	19.9	18.0	18.3	22.8	19.8
Muslims	--	1	20	56	76	59	212
	--	0.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.0
Christians	17	89	191	524	569	703	2093
	27.4	18.9	10.8	10.4	8.9	10.6	10.3
Others	--	2	5	4	10	6	27
	--	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Total	62	471	1765	5059	6396	6645	20398
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Christians include Europeans/Eurasians. Source: Tabulated from the University of Madras, Calendar for 1922.

Table 7 Scholars by caste/community and stage of instruction.

Stage/year	Brahmins	Other Hindus	Panchamas	Muslims	Christians	Others	Total
Higher							
1891	2961	992	--	67	417	13	4450
	66.5	22.3	--	1.5	9.4	0.3	100.0
1901	3207	798	5	87	405	5	4507
	71.2	17.7	0.1	1.9	9.0	0.1	100.0
1911	4012	1121	--	103	559	6	5801
	69.2	19.3	--	1.8	9.6	0.1	100.0
1916	6432	1956	2	200	962	13	9565
	67.2	20.4	0.0	2.1	10.1	0.1	100.0
Secondary							
1891	14254	10919	313	1275	6667	128	33556
	42.5	32.5	0.9	3.8	19.9	0.4	100.0
1901	26961	19723	255	2353	10095	49	59436
	45.4	33.2	0.4	4.0	17.0	0.1	100.0
1911	45124	40544	280	5519	18712	157	110336
	40.9	36.7	0.3	5.0	17.0	0.1	100.0
1916	59133	59546	724	7114	23074	301	149892
	39.5	39.7	0.5	4.7	15.4	0.2	100.0
Primary							
1891	73433	376832	21420	65598	48912	1363	587558
	12.5	64.1	3.6	11.2	8.3	0.2	100.0
1901	73399	417199	52118	69281	56007	3542	671546
	10.9	62.1	7.8	10.3	8.3	0.5	100.0
1911	93813	675859	71737	97396	82851	7394	1029050
	9.1	65.7	7.0	9.5	8.1	0.7	100.0
1916	109333	902072	119628	129576	95347	8865	1364821
	8.0	66.1	8.8	9.5	7.0	0.6	100.0
Population	3.2	70.2	16.4	6.3	2.4	1.4	100.0

Note: Scholars in number and percentage. Christians include Europeans/Eurasians. Others include "aborigines" and unspecified groups. Population percentages as per 1891 Census. Source: Tabulated from the PIRs of the respective years.

This numerical increase led to the emergence of an incipient class of English educated Muslims in south India, who, as Suntharalingam has observed, were either absorbed into the administration or became lawyers, doctors, journalists, or teachers (Op. cit., 256). This class had linkages with similar classes in the rest of India, through migration of wealthy and well-educated professionals, as for instance, from Calcutta to Madras; organisations like the National Muhammadan Association

founded in Calcutta in 1878 for drawing government's attention to the socio-educational needs of the privileged Muslims (Ahmed 1981: 36-37); all-India Muslim educational conferences, themselves a part of educated Muslims' efforts to mobilize public opinion for their action programmes (Ahmed 1981: 152); and the British perception of Indian Muslims as an all-India ensemble as reflected in its educational and employment policies since the 1870s. Such linkages gave this new class a semblance of pan-Indian identity, especially in the face of an emergent Hindu nationalism through all-India and provincial organisations like the Indian National Congress and the Madras Mahajana Sabha which heightened the consciousness of educated Muslims of their own political effeteness and minority status (Suntharalingam 1980: 253-256).

Though not very effective in leadership and mobilisation, this class tried to articulate the aspirations of the Muslim community. Numerous associations were formed for this purpose, often with overlapping objectives and the same personalities. Of these at least five deserve mention here:

First, the Anjuman-i-Islamiah of Madras founded in 1876 for remitting money through the Turkish Relief Fund launched for helping the Muslim brethren in Turkey, embattled by the 1877 Russian aggression. After its dormancy for a while following the termination of the war in 1878, its activities since 1881 centered on regional issues like ventilating the grievances of Muslims, reforming the customs and usages detrimental to their progress, and establishing good fellowship among them and with other communities. According to Suntharalingam, by July 1884 the

Anjuman had about 500 members on its rolls, two schools to educate Muslim youth upto the middle level, and an Urdu paper, <u>Ittifaq</u>. Second, the Madras branch of the Central National Muhammadan Association formed in 1883 as a "proper channel" for Muslims to communicate with the government and for the socio-political and intellectual improvement of the community. Third, the Board of Muhammadan Education in the same year for maintaining a boarding house attached to the Madrasa-i-Azam for the secular and religious education of at least 200 resident Muslims at a time. Fourth, the Anjuman-i-Mufidi-Ahla-i-Islam established in 1884 for furthering the interests of the Muslims by approaching the government on matters affecting their rights and privileges, and promoting their loyalty and attachment to the government and the throne. It was managing a technical school and a workshop, and since 1903 was in receipt of an yearly grant of Rs 5000 from the government. Fifth, the Central Mahomedan Association launched in 1886 at the instance of CD Maclean, Collector of Sea Customs and Chairman of the Mahomedan Educational Endowment Fund for unifying other Muslim associations.

[14] Humayun Jah Bahadur was president, and Mahomed Abdulla Badsha, a wealthy merchant, was treasurer of the first and second; Mir Ansaruddin, Presidency Magistrate, and Mohamed Ishak, Assistant Government Agent at Chepauk (Madras), were vice-presidents of the second; Ahmad Mohidin, a member of the Prince of Arcot's staff, Syed Abdur Rahman, a Bengal Muslim qualified as barrister in England and practising in the Madras High Court, and

Mohidin Sheriff, a doctor at a Triplicane (Madras) hospital were secretaries of the first, second, and third; Governor Wenlock was patron, and prince of Arcot was vice-patron of the fourth; and Lt. Col. TO Underwood, Paymaster, Carnatic Stipends, was president, and Syed Mahomed Nizamuddin, a lawyer of the Madras High Court, was secretary of the fifth (see Radhakrishnan 1990: 512, 519; Saraswathi 1974: 126; Suntharalingam 1980: 250-53; Educational GOs 480 of 7 July 1893, and 977 of 25 October 1913).

The articulation by these and other associations, often limited to government patronage, was through the Provincial Councils, Muslim press, petitions and memorials.

Provincial Councils

Of these, the Provincial Council started in 1862 under the 1861 Indian Councils Act, was probably the least effective. In the transactions of the Council the nominated members, far outweighed by officials, had hardly any say, and the nominations were innocuous "honours" flaunted by some of the local notables on whom the Governor fancied to confer them. The meetings were also few and far between, not exceeding a dozen times a year, arbitrarily convened by the Governor (see Krishnaswamy 1989: 2-7; Markandan 1964: 12-13). The observation of the Madras Almanac that during Humayun Jah Bahadur's long tenure in the Council from 1867 till his death in 1893 it could hardly remember a single occasion when he took an active part in its proceedings (Markandan 1964: 12), echoes the hollowness of such nominations.

Though the 1892 Act was an improvement over the 1861 Act, the Provincial Council under it was still a far cry from a representative institution, and interpellations by Muslim

nominees were few and far between. Some exceptions were those by Vellore Mohamed Sheriff in 1896-97, and Gulam Mohamed Sahib Bahadur in 1898-99 (see Markandan 1964: 88-90). Depending on its expediency the government explained its action in response to certain interpellations such as on Muslim education and employment; and declined to comply with certain others such as for reservation in public service for qualified Muslims, for inquiring into individual claims of Muslim graduates for advancement in higher ranks, and for appointment of a committee of members of leading Muslim associations in Madras to report upon Muslim employment. Interpellations which embarrassed the government were invariably disallowed.[15]

Muslim press

The Muslim press was relatively more effective. In 1887 the Central Muhammadan Association, Madras Presidency, made two suggestions for securing larger employment of qualified Muslims in public service. One was the preparation of a list of Muslims seeking employment in government service. The government advised the Association that it would further its cause by preparing the list itself and forwarding directly to the heads of departments. The other was for furnishing information of vacancies to the editor of *Muslim Herald* for free publication. The government commended this to the heads of departments (GO 677 Education, 7 December 1887).

A decade later the editor of *Muhammadan* brought to the government's notice that though the *Muslim Herald* had agreed to publish free all advertisements for Muslim candidates, the matter

was dropped after a while. He felt that though heads of departments might have been inclined to comply with government orders, want of information about qualified hands was coming in the way. In view of this, he also offered to publish free all advertisements requiring Muslim candidates. The government commended this also to the heads of departments (GO 100 Public, 4 February 1897).

Shortly thence, the Muhammadan of March 11 and 14, 1901 made a furore over a suggestion to withdraw all concessions to the Muslims. The suggestion was by Rev. E Sell, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council of Aided Education, Madras Presidency, made at the anniversary of Harris High School, Mangalore. Speaking generally, Sell averred, he could not see any improvement in Muslim education, that too despite very special and peculiar privileges, and called for the most earnest attention of the leaders of the Muslim community. In that context he observed that "[a] favoured class is apt to become a lethargic one" and as such "the quickest method of rousing their interest and energy would be to abolish all special concessions and privileges".

Condemning Sell's suggestion, in a memorial to the Governor the Muslims of Mangalore town pleaded that the time to accept it had not come, that their younger generation deserved some more concessions as a "backward class", and that those already granted were inadequate and unequal to what their Hindu brethern were enjoying since the organization of public service. Their specific requests were for some suitable Anglo-Hindustani schools with superior management and low fee for the education of the Muslims

of Mangalore district, and to confer on them some responsible posts such as of deputy Collector and tahsildar. In view of what it felt as too many concessions already offered, the government declined to do anything more (GOs 37 Education, 27 January 1900; 552 Education, 30 September 1901).

Petitions and memorials

Of all the means of Muslim articulation petitions and memorials were the most effective. Of these only a few are discussed here.

At the all-India level, in an 1882 memorial to Viceroy Ripon, which the Education Commission of that year reported as by far the most important of all the memorials from Muslims (GOI 1883: 496-97), the National (redesignated as "Central National" since 1883) Muhammadan Association, one of the most effective Muslim political pressure groups of the late 19th century (Ahmed 1981: 163-64), deplored the "decayed" position of Indian Muslims and the circumstances which prolonged it. These, according to the memorial, were the substitution of Persian with English or the vernacular as the official language; resumption during 1828-46 of the revenue free grants which under the Muslim rule were generally made to men of learning for charitable and pious purposes, and the 1864 order that Enlish alone should be the language of examination for the more coveted appointments in the subordinate civil service. Of the poor representation of Muslims in public service it observed:

> It has been to no purpose,... that for the last twenty years the Musalmans have made strenuous efforts to qualify themselves to enter the lists successfully with the Hindus, for, with every avenue to public employment already jealously blocked by members of a different race, it is almost impossible for a Muhammadan candidate to obtain a footing in

> any Government office. The various orders, issued from time to time, that a proper regard should be paid to the claims of Musalmans had practically become inoperative (GOI 1883: 497).

This memorial was fully reported upon by the provincial governments and discussed by the Education Commission (GO 507 Education, 14 August 1885). As Ripon left India before he could deal with it, his successor, Dufferin, after considering it and other related material, reaffirmed his "lively interest" in the advancement and well-being of the Muslim community in India, and laid down the following policy:

> It is the earnest desire of the Supreme Government to treat all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in India with absolute impartiality, and see all alike benefiting by the protection, the patronage and the assistance of the state (GO 507 Education, 14 August 1885).

In an 1888 memorial, recalling the one of 1882, the Association again drew the attention of the Viceroy to the difficulties under which Muslims generally laboured in obtaining a just recognition of their claims to a proper share of government patronage, despite government's repeated expression of goodwill. Forwarding a copy of this memorial to the Madras government, the Government of India reaffirmed its policy laid down in 1885 (GO 577 Education, 27 September 1888; 57 Education, 1 February 1889).[16]

At the regional level, an 1886 petition by the Anjuman-i-Islam of Salem called for conferring on Muslims the newly sanctioned appointments of income tax clerks in the Collectorates, their divisional offices, etc. The Government replied that it had decided to employ only men from the permanent establishment for income tax work, and that in filling up the temporary vacancies thus created due consideration will be given to the orders already issued regarding Muslim employment. At the same time, it

ordered the preparation in all departments of statements of the entire number of officials from the highest to the lowest grades employed in public service under the classes Brahmins, Other Hindus, Muhammadans, Native Christians, and Europeans/Eurasians. Officials whose salary did not exceed Rs 10 a month were to be shown separately, while menial and inferior servants like punkah (fan) pullers, scavengers, and members of the police and village establishments were to be excluded (see GOs 43 Education, 30 January 1883; 3433 Revenue, 10 June 1886; and 415 Education, 1 July 1886). The statistics available from these and related returns have already been discussed in the context of Table 4.

The December 1901 Muhammadan Educational Conference of Southern India passed a resolution for recognition of Hindustani as an official language in departmental examinations on the ground that its exclusion from the list of recognised languages was operating against the Muslims who wished to enter government service. The resolution was forwarded to the governmment by the president of the Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India (GO 645 Education, 17 October 1902)

A 1907 address to the Viceroy by the Anjuman-i-Mufid-i-Ahla-i-Islam, the Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India, and the Madras Presidency Muslim League started in 1908 as the provincial branch of the all-India Muslim League founded in 1906 (McPherson 1969: 387; also GO 977 Education, 25 October 1913), represented that one of the questions in which Muslims like other Indian communities felt keenly interested concerned their position in government service. Stating that the status of the

Muslims was by no means such as to satisfy their legitimate expectations, it pointed out that there were several properly qualified young men who could not find suitable openings (GO 263 Public, 3 April 1907).

Prompted by this address the Madras government considered from various angles the measures taken since 1872 for Muslim advancement. Finding that Muslims held 14.1 per cent of all the posts in superior service in 1907-08, it observed that they could not complain of not having a fair share of such posts. However, since superior service included a large number of ill-paid posts, the statistics also showed that they had considerably less than their proportionate share of higher appointments: The percentages of appointments held by them on yearly salaries of Rs 250-500, Rs 500-1000, Rs 1000-2500, Rs 2500-5000, and Rs 5000 and above were 4.7, 4.3, 5.4, 4.1, and 1.2 respectively. To bring out this inadequacy more clearly the government argued that out of a 100 posts arithmetically due to them they held only 73 on salaries of Rs 250-500, 67 on Rs 500-1000, 84 on Rs 1000-2500, 63 on Rs 2500-5000, and 18 on Rs 5000 and above. However, it also noted that this arithmetical inadequacy was not for want of official favour, and showed that the figures available of those qualified and those holding appointments as deputy collectors, _tahsildars_ and deputy _tahsildars_ pointed to the conclusion that Muslims were specially favoured (GO 263 Public, 3 April 1907).

In petitions and representations in the context of the Morley-Minto reforms, the Madras Presidency Muslim League insisted on conferring on Muslims the right to choose their own representatives in the Provincial Council through election

instead of nomination, and for Muslim representation on the Imperial Council. The government conceded to these demands (see Public GOs 379 of 2 June, and 565 of 6 August 1909; 1-2 of 3 January, and 78-79 of 26 January 1910).

The December 1910 all-India Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference held at Nagpur forwarded a copy to the Madras government of its resolution for fixing a suitable number of Muslim students in all classes of schools and colleges. As there were then no cases of rejection of Muslim students, the government did not find it necessary to fix their number. However, when the Muhammadan Educational Association of Southern India forwarded a similar resolution in September 1916, the government considered it impracticable. Its reasoning was that even if the colleges were induced to set apart a few seats for Muslims, Muslim students may not always avail themselves of such seats, in which case students of other communities who would have otherwise been admitted would be inconvenienced (see Educational GOs 397 of 21 June 1911, and 329 of 10 March 1917).

Buttressing the British policies towards Brahmins and Muslims were the pressures from non-Brahmin Hindus.

Non-Brahmin pressures and British response

In fact, from almost the beginning of British rule non-Brahmin Hindus were protesting against Brahmin dominance. An 1840

petition by 32 Panchalar from Salem blamed the East India Company for succumbing to the wiliness of Brahmins by, among other things, conferring on them all the responsible public offices, and prayed for employment of all classes of men alike

without distinction (see Bower 1851: 91-95). Similar petitions of the subsequent years, though sporadic to begin with, gathered momentum towards the close of the 19th century.

One group persistent in its demands prior to the non-Brahmin movement was the Oriyas (also Uriyas). An 1891 memorial by K Adinarayan, K Ramamurti, and 127 other "principal members" of the Vizagpatam district Oriya Samaj stated that the absence of their "class" in the several offices even to give information of any vacancies, and the presence of all the head ministerial officers from a different sect having no "patriotism" towards them, made it difficult for them to get government employment. It also stated that government orders on distribution of appointments equally among all classes were not adhered to; and that due to the "unemployed... and beggarly condition" of the few Matriculates among the Oriyas with no hope of finding employment, parents were persuading their children to discontinue their education. Citing the patronage offered to Muslims they sought preference in government employment particularly in the Ganjam-Vizagpatam districts and the Agency tracts.

Responding to the memorial, the government furnished a list of qualified Oriyas (14 names submitted by the DPI) to the Collectors, district judges and some other officials, for consideration when filling up vacancies; and informed the memorialists accordingly (GO 521 Education, 9 July 1891).

Referring to a GO of October 1906 for preferring better candidates to certain qualified Oriyas, in a letter of the same month the Ganjam district Oriya Samaj pleaded that though the British policy was to distribute its patronage among the

different "races" of India, as a result of this GO "the advanced races may always carry the day and a backward race like the Uriyas must go to the wall", and that the required qualifications for public service being equal, such a system is "calculated to unduly handicap the progress of the backward races and give an undue advantage to the advanced races". It suggested nomination of Oriyas for fair representation in the administration of the district. The government expressed its inability to do so on the ground that it would disregard the prescribed qualifications for appointments in superior service (GO 217 Judicial, 31 January 1907).

Persisting with its claim, in May 1907 the Samaj pointed out that government orders for giving preference to Oriyas in the Oriya speaking tracts were always overlooked, and requested for reservation of a certain proportion of the magisterial and other high appointments in the district "as a means of preventing monopoly of loaves and fishes of the State by the advanced races". While rejecting the request, the government stated that steps will be taken to employ educated Oriyas as far as possible, and conveyed the same to the Agent to the Governor in the Ganjam district (GO 1161 Judicial, 27 June 1907).

In a similar address in 1913 the Samaj pointed out that Oriyas were not being appointed to higher posts in the provincial civil service and special services such as of deputy collector, munsiff, and deputy superintendent/circle inspector of police, and reiterated its demand for nomination of some qualified Oriyas to these posts. Stating that of the nine new names for deputy

collectors eight were Brahmins, in a note on the address AG Cardew, Revenue Secretary, asked the BOR to submit some additional names, all of non-Brahmins, and advised it to have one-third of its fresh recommendations each year from non-Brahmins. The government's reply to the Samaj was that it was ready to do all in its power to encourage Oriyas in public service when possible to do so (GO 22 Public, 5 January 1914).

A brief look at some of the other petitions and memorials of this period should give a better idea of the non-Brahmin perception of themselves, of Brahmins, Brahmin dominance, and the British administration:

An 1896 petition by T Tiruvengata Mudaliar and 14 others, on their own behalf and purportedly also on behalf of the "dumb masses" of Anantapur district, deplored that the composition of the personnel of the district was against the letter and spirit of the "wholesome" BSO which was often violated with impunity. It also stated that the pernicious control of virtually all the public offices in the district by a "family coach" under the guidance of <u>huzur sheristadar</u> Seshagiri Rao was a crying evil, disastrous to public interest and dispiriting to the people, and that Collectors as a class did not trouble themselves to look below the surface and appointed officials on the advice and information given by the <u>sheristadar</u>. It urged the Governor to remedy the evil by, as a first step, transferring the <u>sheristadar</u> to some other district. Acting on this petition, the BOR asked the Collector to furnish a list of the relations of the <u>sheristadar</u> (GO 4282 Revenue (Confidential), 30 October 1896).

While on this petition it may be relevant to note the following

statement of the Education Commission drawing upon its Madras Report:

> [T]he children of peasants (read non-Brahmin Hindus) have no special provision made for their education in middle schools, and take no advantage of these institutions. The only public service examination in Madras is the middle school examination, and therefore the door to the public service is closed against the peasant proprietary (GOI 1883: 144).

This educational backwardness is clearly evident from Tables 5-7: For a population of 86.6 per cent, non-Brahmin Hindus (including Paraiyas and kindred classes alias Panchamas or the present Scheduled Castes who had not then emerged as a separate category) accounted for only 23.5 per cent of the total Matriculates, and 19.8 per cent of the total Arts and Professional graduates from 1858-61 to 1916, and 20.4 per cent and 40.2 per cent of the total students in 1916 under higher and secondary education respectively. Even in primary education their representation (74.9 per cent) was below their population percentage.

The Education Commission had observed in the context of this backwardness that "[t]he most efficacious of all encouragements to the spread of education is that supplied by the bestowal of public appointments upon educated candidates", and that "[u]nfortunately no lever for raising education is less systematically applied" (ibid). This observation is also borne out by the statistics collected by the government in 1872, 1881, and 1886, in the context of Muslim employment. The representation of non-Brahmin Hindus was only about 32 per cent in 1881, and had increased only by 4 per cent since the preceding decade. Though by 1886 it had increased considerably, it was mostly in posts on salaries of Rs 10 or less: In 1886 non-Brahmin Hindus were 68.2

per cent of the total officials on salaries of Rs 10 or less, and 33 per cent on salaries exceeding Rs 10 (Table 4). Reviewing the statistics in 1887 the BOR noted that in the disproportionate distribution of employment non-Brahmin Hindus were the worst sufferers:

> These have suffered from no scholastic disadvantages in having to learn through the medium of a foreign language, and their disparity to Brahmins must be attributed in part to their not having yet overtaken the great lead which centuries of past education has naturally given to the Brahmin, and in part to their largely embracing the agricultural classes, which will never enter the competition to any great extent.

Accordingly, it drew the attention of the Collectors to the proportion of offices which on a representative basis should be held by each class, mentioning at the same time that that representative proportion cannot be rigidly imposed at once without injury to offices, and can only be approached to in the course of years (GO 1296 Revenue, 1 March 1887).

An 1897 memorial by the Viswakulotharana Association, Madras,[18] submitting to the Governor its "Kammala Condition Amelioration Bill" made the following observations:

Kammalas constitute not less than one-tenth of the total Presidency population, but have no seat in the Legislative Council. "[T]o accord to them one is to secure them an agency to watch their interests; develop them in different directions, and establish a good loyal power out of the forces within the race". The exclusion of the country's vernaculars from the work of administration has affected the progress of all classes of the people. As even the commonest nail is imported, the Kammalas who were the suppliers of all the local wants are placed in acute

poverty. They are most deplorably backward in education, and require stipends as a necessary incentive for education until they receive a due share of public appointments; and special schools like the ones for Muslims and Pariahs. High educational qualifications though not needed for ordinary office routine are yet demanded universally; examination rules prescribing such qualifications, the age bar, and prohibitive school and college fees deter the disabled classes from competing with the predominant class, and are a patent obstruction to the free growth of all the interests concerned. Inability of the few qualified Kammalas to obtain decent situations in public service has nipped in the bud the hope of the community's future in a matter of vital consequence to its rise. Each class has its "sacred right" to a share in public service. In the Accountant General's office out of every 14 candidates selected ten are Brahmins, and nepotism and intrigue are in full play.

Its most eloquent expression was its resentment against Brahmin preponderance:

> One class, by undue preponderance in the public service absorbs the vast resources coming from the sweat of all classes and set apart for that service; this places it in a position to educate itself, and it again absorbs such other resources of the country, set apart for public instruction. Public monies are thus doubly locked up and, for want of legitimate use, fail to exert their regenerating influences on all the contributing classes (GOs 970-71 Public, 20 July 1897).

In 1902 the Acharis (Kammalar) of Tinnevelly district pointed out that public service was fully and skilfully shut out to them through the particular and peculiar revenging spite of the Brahmins, and that surrounded by them the British officials were being entirely misled (GO 112 Education, 11 March 1903).

A 1910 memorial of the "leading representatives" of the Lingayat community and of the all-India fifth Lingayat conference held at Bellary in December 1909, submitted to the government by M Basava Iya, High Court vakil, Bellary, observed with "extreme regret" the specially backward condition of the Lingayats in English education and representation in public service. The memorial requested the government to encourage and improve their education, offer concessions, and appoint them in responsible positions in the revenue, judicial, and other branches of public service. As a climb down, against its earlier request for three seats in the Madras Legislative Council which the government had turned down, the memorial requested for one seat.

The public department termed as misnomer the Lingayats' claim as a "depressed class", inasmuch as in the pamphlet attached to the memorial they had claimed themselves as superior to Brahmins, and their religion as an improvement on the Vedas. Its reply to the memorialists was that government was not prepared to show special favour to members of any particular sect in public service disregarding their fitness, and to reconsider its earlier decision against Lingayats' separate representation in the Legislative Council (GO 660 Public, 28 July 1910).

One group which has not figured in the discussion of non-Brahmin Hindus is the "depressed classes", comprising mostly the Panchamas and partly the "hill tribes". Even as late as 1916, for a population of about 16.4 per cent their representation was virtually nil in higher education, only less than 1 per cent in secondary education, and about 8.8 per cent in primary education

(see Table 7). With such educational backwardness they could not have had any significant representation in public service either. Nor could they have made any serious claim for such representation as they were ill-equipped to fill important government posts. That probably explains the absence of any mention of them in the statistics on government employment.

Meanwhile, most of the petitions for inclusion in the backward classes list for educational concessions, especially after the introduction of half-fee concession in 1892 had also urged for representation in public service. More often than not, the education department considered them favourably for inclusion in the list (see Radhakrishnan 1990: 512-3). Their claims for representation in public service were, however, overlooked. This could have been because either the petitions were not directly for such representation, or the petitioners were not articulate enough as pressure groups. However, this situation began to change since 1917 when a vocal and well organised pressure group appeared on the scene. An understanding of this change anticipates a close look at the non-Brahmin movement which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion

Though communal representation and reservations are often identified with the non-Brahmin movement and the Indian Constitution respectively, the evolution of the non-Brahmin movement itself was preceded by certain intricate and elaborate processes of over half a century. These processes had direct bearing on communal representation and reservations at the ideational and pragmatic levels as functional imperatives of the

colonial administration.

The imperatives were both tactical and moral. On the tactical side were considerations of the stability and legitimacy of the British administration, as evident from its attempts to draw on its side first the "influential class", and later the "alienated class"; its apprehension of corruption, nepotism, favouritism, administrative inefficiency, and the undermining of British authority by the administrative dominance of the "influential class", and belated attempts to prevent such dominance; and its fear of the poor representation of the "alienated class" as injurious to the most vital interests of the empire. On the moral side was a seemingly abiding concern for rendering justice to the disprivileged sections of the society through attempts at communal representation and reservations on the ground that they could not compete on equal terms with the "influential class", and the related dilemma to strike a balance between equity and efficiency.

As the imperatives were often incompatible with each other, they resulted in contradictions. Examples are the failures of the administration to ensure its professed neutrality principle because of its exclusion of the lower castes for fear of alienating the "influential class"; to honour its policy of absolute impartiality because of its special treatment of "the alienated class" for fear of its disaffection; and to stick to its repeated assertions against communal representation and reservations because of their ad hoc introduction as part of its patronage politics.

The long interface of this period between the colonial administration and the local society created in the non-Brahmin segments an increasing awareness of the close nexus between English education and government employment, their own disprivileged position in both compared to the Brahmins, and the role of British administration as a great dispenser of patronage. The recurrent themes in such interface were inferior versus superior races, backward versus forward races, administrative stability, and distribution of government patronage. Each group was concerned with its own claims and reference to others was not for any concern for overall social justice or equality, but for only justifying its own claims. There was also no composite category of non-Brahmins as used in the context of the subsequent non-Brahmin movement.

While all groups were eager to have a share of the government patronage, only one group was equipped itself for doing so through competition by mastering English though this language was as alien to it as to all others. Other groups merely sought protection. This was especially so in the case of Kammalar, who for several centuries maintained a struggle for a higher place in the social scale than allotted to them by the Brahminical authority (see Maclean 1989: 229), though unlike the Brahmins they hardly made any effort for competition for the material and socio-cultural benefits under successive rulers.

To conclude, central to the discourse on communal representation and reservation of this period, the related administrative processes, and the non-Brahmin response to them were the statistics collected from time to time. These made the

non-Brahmins and the British officials increasingly aware of the structural cleavages in south Indian society of Brahmin versus non-Brahmins, Hindus versus Muslims, and so on. Such awareness in turn sharpened these cleavages, pitted the non-Brahmins against the Brahmins, and gradually paved the way for the non-Brahmin movement.

Notes

Abbreviations

BOR = Board of Revenue
BRP = Board of Revenue Proceedings
BSO = Board of Revenue's Standing Order
DPI = Director of Public Instruction
GO = Government Order
GOI = Government of India
GOM = Government of Madras
GOMa - Government of Maharashtra
MPAR = Madras Presidency Administration Report
PIR - Public Instruction Report

[Unless specified otherwise the GOs and other proceedings cited are of the GOM, consulted at the Tamil Nadu Archives. This paper is part of a larger study of backward classes and reservations. The author is grateful to Malcolm S Adiseshiah and S Neelakantan for their comments on its draft.]

1 Krishna's contention that the origins of communal representation "are to be sought in the growth and strength of the Indian National Congress and the need for a policy of counterpoise by the Government against the Congress" (Op. cit., 37) is true only for representation in politics and not in public service, the main concern of this paper.

2 The oft-quoted episodes of such closures are from Ramayana about Rama beheading Shambuk for his tapasya (penance), an austerity prohibited to Shudras; and from Mahabharata about Drona mutilating Ekalavya's thumb for learning archery even after he declined to teach him owing to his "low birth".

3 In this connection it is relevant to note that admission of "untouchable" students in 1851 to the Madras High School (of the Madras University) established in 1841, was strongly condemned by the caste-Hindus, with some withdrawing their wards, and one Hindu member resigning from the University Board. See Suntharalingam 1980: 58-61.

4 O'hanlon has observed that in 1851 "when the Board of Education, after much heart-searching, had decided that it could not admit Mahar boys to government schools", dnyanodaya, then the most important missionary periodical of Western India, "protested bitterly against this deference to a set of social rules that took no account of individual qualities", and that this case was the subject of a long correspondence of the Bombay government. O'hanlon 1985: 72, also 66, 70.

5 Suntharalingam has explained this monopoly by their recruitment into the revenue administration since the 16th century when the Deccani incursions into the Tamil and Telugu regions gathered momentum; and the eagerness of early British officials to use their expertise in creating the district administrative framework. Suntharalingam 1980: 19-20.

6 Going by the 1901 Census, of the 1198914 Brahmins in Madras Presidency Mahratta Brahmins along with Konkani and Tulu Brahmins (all classified under "Others") were 8.8 per cent of the Brahmins, whereas the percentages of Tamil, Telugu, Oriya, Canarese, and Malayalam Brahmins were 34.7, 36.4, 10.7, 7.8 and 1.6 respectively. See GOM 1902, XVA(2): 156.

7 Exceptions were Nambutiri Brahmins of Malabar, and Vydiki Brahmins of Northern Circars, who for a long time spurned English education. See Suntharalingam 1980: 113.

8 Dash in the Tables throughout the paper indicates nil.

9 This College was then only a feeder to public service, with admissions to it regulated by government's need for engineers.

10 In theory, the requirement for this service was a pass in Matriculation or upper secondary examination in first class, and in a test in hand-writing and dictation. In practice, some of the higher appointments were restricted to persons of higher educational attainments. Thus, only those who had passed the First Arts were admitted to the criminal judicial tests prescribed for the appointments of tahsildars or inspectors of police; and non-graduates could not ordinarily become deputy collectors, as only graduates could appear for the higher grades revenue test. See PIR 1886-87; MPAR 1901-02.

11 Figures for 1872-81 were mostly for posts on salaries of Rs. 11 and more, whereas those for 1886 covered virtually all the posts on salaries of Rs. 10 and less. The formation of Anantapur district and the large additions since 1881 to the establishments of the Salt Commissioner, the Forest Conservator, etc., also added to the 1886 figures. See GO 1296 Revenue, 1 March 1887.

12 Figures are for Bachelor of Arts, Law, Medicine/Surgery, and Civil Engineering; Master of Arts, and Law; Doctor of Medicine, and Law; and Licentiate in Medicine/Surgery, Sanitary Service, and Teaching.

13 Table excludes education department's "special schools" and institutions not recognised by it.

14 Humayun Jah Bahadur, a descendant of Tipu Sultan, born and educated in Calcutta, was settled in Madras as a wealthy notable with large landed and business interests. See Suntharalingam 1980: 251.

15 For some of these interpellations, see Public GOs 323 of 14 March 1899, 396 of 5 April 1899, 629-30 of 9 June 1899, 1401 of 22 December 1899, 1407 and 1409 of 23 December 1899.

16 Following this reaffirmation, for encouraging their entry into medical service the Madras government reserved for Muslims a certain number of stipendiary appointments in the medical apprentice grade. See GO 507 Education, 14 August 1885.

17 Panchalar or Viswa Brahmins are ironsmiths, carpenters, brasiers, masons, and goldsmiths, commonly called Kammalar in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, Kamsalas in Andhra Pradesh, and Panchalas in South Kanara. See Bower 1851: 91-95; Maclean 1989: 229; Washbrook 1975: 162-64.

18 The Commissioner of Police reported in August 1897 that this association held only one meeting since its inauguration in December 1894, attended by about 80 Kammalas who resolved to forward to Parliament a memorial signed by every goldsmith and carpenter in Madras, and to start a Tamil paper "Visvaguru" as soon as sufficient funds were forthcoming. See GO 528-29 Public, 9 May 1899.

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